

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

BY

MOST REV. JOHN AKIN OYEJOLA

AT

THE NATIONAL YOUTH SEMINAR ON
YOUNG PEOPLE, THE FAITH AND VOCATIONAL DISCERNMENT

Greetings of Peace to you all.

I feel honoured to be with you to deliver the keynote address of this seminar that seeks to answer the call of the 15th Ordinary General Assembly of Synod of Bishops, on young People. I want to start this address by thanking the organisers of this seminar who thought it wise to bring home the message of the Synod of Bishops on young people. You will soon understand why I have to start my presentation by thanking them.

The challenges confronting young people everywhere in the world are similar. Earlier this year, Education and Health Charity, Central YMCA, surveyed 1,600 young people aged between 16 and 25. The reason for the survey was to assess the nature of the challenges young people are facing in our time. The top 10 of the challenges identified by the 1,600 surveyed young people are:

1. Lack of employment opportunities
2. Failure to succeed in education system
3. Issues related to body image
4. Family problems
5. Substance abuse
6. Pressures of materialism
7. Lack of affordable housing
8. Negative stereotyping
9. Pressures of 24-hour social networking
10. Crime

For those who are familiar with what young people are going through in our country, they will think that the survey was done in Nigeria. A look through the list shows that it represents the challenges of young Nigerians, as well as the challenges confronting young people all over the world. Having said this however, I want to add

that these challenges come in various ways and degrees in different parts of the world. For this reason, I think whatever is done at the global level should be brought down to the local level for implementation. Now that the programme has been brought to our country, it is very important that you must be interested and actively involved in it. "You cannot win in the game of life if you are not on the playing field."

Cardinal Napier of South Africa observed that, the working document produced by the Synod of Bishops on young people was highly "Eurocentric" in content and approach. He emphasized that the Synod's work should take into account the situation of young people and the Church in other parts of the world especially the needs of the Church in Africa. He mentioned that the working document of the Synod did not do justice to issues of migration in Africa and the harsh economic conditions that lead to child labour which in turn affects the education of many children in Africa. May I add here the problem of "forced and voluntary" human trafficking of young Africans without the benefit of dignified existence outside the African continent in different parts of the developed and developing countries.

Another interesting point raised by Cardinal Napier was that: "while many young people in the West are leaving Jesus, or at least his Church, and they are doing this for a variety of reasons... in Africa, there is a different kind of phenomenon and that is that young people are looking for Jesus and looking for answers to their problems in the Church." (Agenziafides, 17/10/2018). So, the challenges are similar but they are not one and the same.

This seminar is an attempt to bring home the message of the Synod on young people and a response to the challenges raised by Cardinal Napier and some other persons. The speakers at this seminar will not just be looking at the serious issues raised in the Synod on young people from a global perspective; they will speak to the Nigerian situation. That is why this seminar is very important. I do hope the resource persons at this seminar will bridge the gaps in the document vis-a-vis the existential challenges confronting the young people in Nigeria. Once again, I thank the organisers for their initiative in calling for this seminar and congratulate the delegates here present for being part of this.

When I look at young people in the Church, their ideas and energy, their faith and desire to work for God, two questions come immediately to mind:

v How can the Church maximize the special gifts of young people?

v What are the unique resources that youth bring to the table that can help define their roles in creating a good future for the Church?

First, there is the need for everybody involved in the Church to acknowledge the special gifts the youths possess and put to them to use. Young people are full of life and they have a lot of gifts to offer the world and the Church. They have energy with innovation, they are enthusiastic, and they are daring. Pearl Block was right when he said that, "youthfulness is all about having the courage and the daring to think that one can be whatever her or she wants to be and achieve it." Young people attempt the impossible and achieve it generation after generation. For a young person, everything is possible. Youthful hearts are filled with visions for the future. The Church must tap into this and use it for the upliftment of the Church and the glory of God.

If well managed, the talents, enthusiasms and vigour of the youths can be veritable tools in the hands of the Church to achieve magnificent things for God. The problem most times is that the potential of young people in the Church are overlooked and dismissed on the grounds that they are impetuous, ignorant and unworthy of serious responsibility. The truth however is that when young people are well guided, God can use their impetuosity and "ignorance" to achieve great things. John Andrew Holmes was on point when he said: "Never tell a young person that anything cannot be done. God may have been waiting for centuries for somebody ignorant enough of the impossible to do that very thing."

What the Church needs at this time is to learn new and better ways of journeying with young people, listening and reaching out to them, where they are, without being judgmental and by empowering them to make positive difference in their lives and in the Church. The youths must be encouraged to be committed to a life of holiness and hard work. For, "through the holiness of so many young people willing to renounce life in the midst of persecution in order to remain faithful to the Gospel, the Church can renew its spiritual ardor and its apostolic vigour." (Vatican News, 27 October, 2018).

My dear young Nigerians, in order to overcome the ten top most challenges confronting the youths worldwide mentioned earlier, you must be close to God in prayer. Take your faith seriously and be morally upright. A person without discipline will die without honour. A person without a sense of values will be worthless in the

society. At this point in our national history, things are extremely difficult, you must not be tempted to give up until you overcome all the challenges in your path to greatness. As noted by a wise man: "You must take personal responsibility. You cannot change the circumstances, the seasons, or the wind, but you can change yourself." To succeed in any noble venture you have to take 100% personal responsibility for everything you experience in life.

This is what the 15th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on "Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment" is inviting us to do and we must respond adequately. We must seize the moment and follow up on the Synod document. At this seminar, in Awka, this must be our pledge. There is no alternative plan to working with the youth and making them more committed to God. Thank you for listening, may God bless you all.

+ Most Rev. John Akin Oyejola
(Bishop, Catholic Diocese of Osogbo.)

DAILY STRENGTH YOUTH EVANGELIZATION

BY

BRO. JUDE I. CHIKA

AT

THE NATIONAL YOUTH SEMINAR ON
YOUNG PEOPLE, THE FAITH AND VOCATIONAL DISCERNMENT

With a deep sense of humility, I join the Chief Host; Most Rev Dr John Oyejola, the Catholic Bishop of Osogbo Diocese and the Chairman of the CBCN Youth Committee to welcome everyone who are partaking in this National Youth Seminar. There will be a long list of names to appreciate for having put this programme together. The Lord who sees in secret will definitely reward your efforts.

I have been given the honour to speak about Daily Strength Devotional who essentially is the sponsor of this National Youth Seminar. Daily Strength is an answer to the call for New Evangelization. We aim to implement the new methods and new forms of Evangelization to convey the truth of Our Lord Jesus Christ to Christians especially Catholics, so that the authentic faith taught by the Church will be consciously and personally lived. Daily Strength is a faith building community; whose devotion is to the Word of God through the practice of Lectio Divina with the ultimate goal of encouraging Christians to spend some time, physically and mentally, with God through His word.

The fruit of the Lectio Divina spiritual exercise practised by Daily Strength Family members is expressed in Evangelization and Charity.

Our primary tool of evangelization is the Daily Strength Devotional publication. Daily Strength Devotional is a daily devotional printed quarterly and distributed across the nation and beyond. It is presently produced in English and French languages, also we are exploring opportunities of translating into more languages. We produce two editions every quarter (Nigerian and Ghana editions.) Also, copies of the quarterly devotional are also available via various digital outlets.

Daily Strength Devotional aims to provide a solid platform for Christians especially Catholics to keep abreast with God's word daily, thereby creating the spiritual atmosphere for Christians to experience God in their everyday lives. It has

the goal to encourage Christians in their personal life of prayer and discipleship. We employ simple language, telling real stories of real people's spiritual experiences, their testimonies, their stories of victory over sin and true episodes of conversion. Through the assistance of the Holy Spirit, Daily Strength Devotional is our modest contribution to the church's call to New Evangelization.

In keeping with our mission of Evangelization, we collaborate with Parishes, Dioceses and various organs of the Church within and outside the country, to organize Evangelization outreaches, Retreats, Conferences, Camping Programme, etc

In respect to our Charity ministry, Daily Strength embarks on the training of priests, sponsorship of the indigent children, assists orphans, widows, the sick and the under privileged. We produce free copies of Daily Strength Devotional to be freely distributed to hospitals, schools, chapels, hotels, etc We enjoin young people who have the enablement to join us in this mission as we depend on the goodwill of good men and women around the world to actualize this noble mission. May the good Lord continue to reward them in multiple folds. Amen.

Through the leading of the Holy Spirit, Daily Strength has extended her evangelization mission into Youth Evangelization, consistent with the call of the POST-SYNODAL APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION, 'CHRISTUS VIVIT' of the Holy Father Francis to Young People and The Entire People of God Article 30

"In addition to the ordinary, well-planned pastoral ministry, it is also important to allow room for a 'popular'youth ministry, with a different style, schedule, pace and method, broader and more flexible, that goes out to those places where real young people are active, and fosters the natural leadership qualities and the charisms sown by the Holy Spirit"

Daily Strength Devotional through her Youth Evangelization intends to create a friendly environment, the environment which the nature of the youth tends to thrive in. Just like Our Lord Jesus Christ walks with the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, stayed with them in their own place, in the environment they are familiar with. Within this 'youthful' environment, in the language of the youth and using medium of their interest, young people will have 'their hearts burn within them and their minds opened' just as the incidence at Emmaus. Daily Strength through her Youth Evangelization will as much as possible give enablement to young people so

that they can, just like the two disciples at the Emmaus journey, 'choose by themselves to resume their journey at once in the opposite direction, to return to the community and to share the experience of their encounter with the Risen Lord'.

As part of our Youth Evangelization, therefore, Daily Strength is introducing Daily Strength Devotional for Young people. This devotional will be written, putting in consideration the challenges and quest of young people of today and speaks in their language. It will be published quarterly and circulated as far as possible. We encourage young Catholics who have the inspiration to join the team both as contributory writers, as distributors, marketers etc to please contact us.

This 2019 National Youth Seminar is also an output of the Daily Strength Youth Evangelization. We have collaborated with the CBCN Youth Committee, the Youth Animator, the CYON Chaplains and ExcOs to organize this seminar with the goal of giving young Catholics the opportunity to learn from and interact with experts of various fields; extending across various spheres of life, including holiness, faith, chastity, politics, finance, family life and digital media. It births the prospect of new horizons for the Catholic Youth, and we look forward to a very fulfilling seminar.

By the Grace of God, and with the help of the CBCN Youth Committee and various interest groups, Daily Strength will regularly organize seminars, conferences, retreats and various communication forums; giving young Catholics alternative platforms to learn from each other and from experts in various fields of endeavor.

Other medium of Youth Evangelization Daily Strength is looking at exploring includes: Holiday Camps, Skill Training Programmes, Talent Hunts, Business and Investment empowerments, Access to Grants, Organizing various types of competitions on different levels (Essay Competitions, Quiz Competitions, Football Competitions, Music Competitions etc). We are positive that this will add to the concerted effort to continue to animate the Catholic youths, and keep our flock as one.

This will form a part of the larger Evangelization mission of Daily Strength, with young people as its primary audience. There are numerous possibilities to be explored in this mission, as we employ new methods and expressions. We shall work closely with the National Youth Animator as we gradually unfold these media. We also call on all young Catholics out there to give us all the possible assistance and

support as we are all labourers in the vineyard of God.

On behalf of the Daily Strength Family worldwide I once again appreciate Our Chief Host Most Rev Dr. John Akin Oyejola, Our Host Most Rev. Dr. Paulinus Ezekafor, the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria, the Youth Commission, The Youth Animator Rev Fr Mark Obayi, The Chaplains, the Various Speakers and Contributors who obliged us by their full participation, the National President and entire executive of the CYON, the NFCS, the NACC, the YCSN and all the participants. May the Lord continue to water the fruit of evangelization He has planted in you, that you all will blossom like the mustard seed and grow like the Cedars of Lebanon in His service. Amen.

Bro. Jude Chika

Director / Editor-in-Chief Daily Strength Devotional

**YOUTH EVANGELIZATION: THE IMPERATIVE FOR
THE MODERN CHURCH, AS MOTHER AND
TEACHER**

(Raising the Youths in the Faith with and for the New Evangelization.)

BY

MOST REV DR. ERNEST OBODO

THE AUXILIARY BISHOP OF ENUGU DIOCESE

Introduction

"Go into the whole world and proclaim the Good News", (Mk. 16) is a divine injunction that has become both a reality and a mandate for the Church; a reality because the Good News, that is, Jesus Christ echoes and resonates with humanity in all climes and culture. It is also a mandate because it has become the prerogative of the Church to take this Good News of Jesus Christ, to the ends of the earth. This role of the Church as one who nurtures and teaches is best understood in the encyclical of Pope John XXIII who described the Church as 'mother' and 'teacher' (Paul XXII

(1961) *Mater et Magistra*). In this way, the Church is built on values that are Christocentric and is charged with the onus of transmitting such values to the rest of humanity in line with the missionary mandate of Christ.

The life and identity of a Christian is drawn from his relationship with God. The Christian qualifies to bear the title only to the degree he or she has conformed to the person of God (Matt. 5: 48 & Jn. 15:5). God has extended an invitation to all men to share in His divinity; in His image and likeness, God created man. This is to the extent that man shares in the creation activity of God who has invited mankind to take charge of all in the created order (Gen. 1:28). Man stands out in a unique way among all created things, hence the Igbo word for man *mmadu* - the beauty of creation. In humanity one finds the summit of life and creation.

In His nature, God is perfect and He created a world that is good. If truly human beings share in the nature of God, they should possess a reasonable degree of perfection by the very nature of sharing in the person and divinity of God. This is a call to emulate the perfection of God especially among Christians. Given this reality and mandate and considering the uniqueness of the person of Christ and his universal salvific significance, the Church is faced with the challenge of teaching the Good News taking into good note, the attendant challenges that characterise the contemporary human society.

However, one is led into utter wonder when he or she tries to reconcile the realities of existence and the place of modern day Christians. The world today is replete with anomalies that obviously contradict the Christian standards. Given the growing number of Christians and Christian denominations, one would expect a world guided by Christian values and in which Christian principles thrive. On the contrary, evil is on the increase because Christians are found to be silent or indifferent to the plight of the modern man who constantly out-distances himself from God and hence, living a life that is inauthentic; a life outside the image and likeness of God in whom he was created. This situation presents a bleak future for the human society and for the Church.

The Youth: the future of the Church

There is no gainsaying the fact that the future and life of the Church is to a great degree guaranteed by the best it can make out of the younger generation who form the foundation and hope of human progeny. In countries where majority of the attendants to Church activities are youths, the situation signifies hope, but where it is a reverse, it spells doom for the future. "...The gates of hell will never prevail against you" (Mtt 16:18) is a prayerful promise of Christ Himself about the future and life of the Church. If this promise of Christ must see the light of day, it is imperative that the Church embarks on aggressive transformation of the youths so that when they are transformed, they will be fitted for the task of transforming human society (Luke 22:23).

Christianity in the modern world is bedeviled by a host of human, technological, economic, social and environmental factors. All these seem to challenge the Church in her efforts of authentic witnessing and evangelization. To surmount all these challenges and bear fruits, fruits that will last, the Church needs to adopt a new mode of evangelization; new not in the context of a change in the content of evangelization, but new in "ardor, method and expression" (Pope Johnpaul II (1990) *Redemptoris Missio*)

This change of evangelization method becomes necessary if the Church must wade smoothly through the muddy waters of modernity with the mandate of evangelizing the youth and incorporating them into the larger enterprise of evangelization towards guaranteeing a future for the Church.

The Vulnerable Youth for the Indomitable Church

On a primal appraisal, one may simply adopt the assertion that the youth is the future of the Church without a further investigation into the detailed implications of this. By their nature, youths are vulnerable and are most times, subjected to the mercies and decisions of the older generations. They usually are bereft of the public voice and the wherewithal to thread the grounds they would normally wish for. Sometimes, they are considered inexperienced and hence, not charged with serious

responsibilities beyond the immediate natural drive for survival. This makes it a worrisome situation that despite how vulnerable these folks are, the future of the Church is laid on their shoulders.

However, despite how vulnerable the youths may appear, in them is manifest the biblical assertion that God chooses the weak to shame the strong (1 Corinthians 1:27); He does not choose the qualified, instead He qualifies the chosen. Pope Francis in "Christus vivit": Post-Synodal Exhortation to Young People and to the entire People of God, affirms God's disposition to transform and work with the young when he said:

In an age when young people were not highly regarded, some texts show that God sees them differently. Joseph, for example, was the youngest of his family (cf. Gen 37:2-3), yet God showed him great things in dreams and when only seventeen years old he outshone all his brothers in important affairs (cf. Gen 37-47). In Gideon, we see the frankness of young people, who are not used to sugar-coating reality. When told that the Lord was with him, he responded: "But if the Lord is with us, why then have all these things happened to us?" (Jg 6:13). God was not offended by that reproach, but went on to order him: "Go in this might of yours and deliver Israel!" (Jg 6:14).

Samuel was still a young boy, yet the Lord spoke to him.

Thanks to the advice of an adult, he opened his heart to hear God's call: "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening" (1 Sam 3:9-10). As a result, he became a great prophet who intervened at critical moments in the history of his country. King Saul was also young when the Lord called him to undertake his mission (cf. 1 Sam 9:2). King David was chosen while still a boy. When the prophet Samuel was seeking the future king of Israel, a man offered as candidates his sons who were older and more experienced. Yet the prophet said that the chosen one was the young David, who was out tending the flock (cf. 1 Sam 16:6-13), for "man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart" (v. 7). The glory of youth is in the heart, more than in physical strength or the impression given to others. Solomon, when he had to succeed his father, felt lost and told God: "I am a mere youth, not knowing at all how to act" (1 Kg 3:7). Yet the audacity of youth moved him to ask God for wisdom and he devoted himself to his mission. Something similar happened to

the prophet Jeremiah, called despite his youth to rouse his people. In his fear, he said: "Ah, Lord God! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth" (Jer 1:6). But the Lord told him not to say that (cf.

Jer. 1:7), and added: "Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you" (Jer. 1:8). The devotion of the prophet Jeremiah to his mission shows what can happen when the brashness of youth is joined to the power of God. Jewish servant girl of the foreign commander Naaman intervened with faith and helped him to be cured of his illness (cf. 2 Kg 5:2-6). The young Ruth was a model of generosity in remaining beside her mother-in-law who had fallen on hard times (cf. Ru 1:1-18), yet she also showed boldness in getting ahead in life (cf. Ru 4:1-17).

(Pope Francis (2019) *Christus Vivit: Post-Synodal Exhortation to Young People and to the entire People of God*. Nos 6-11.)

When these youths are not properly guided, their cravings and values may toe a line that is contrary to the Gospel of Christ. The biblical prodigal son presents an instance of a misguided youth whose strength and aptitudes were channeled to securing a life of unchecked freedom that almost led him to perdition. However, the decision to journey home back to his father reversed that fate of the young man and vouchsafed his restoration as son.

The story of the prodigal son projects the fact that despite being chosen and cherished by God, youths can be misguided in their cravings and search for authentic life values. This is where the role of the Church as a mother and teacher becomes prominent. Just like the prodigal son who resolved to go back to the father, it is the prerogative of the Church to help the young ones come back to their senses and retrace their steps back to God; the Church guides them diligently to make the decision and resolve to go back to their roots founded in Christ who is the model per-excellence for the youth.

The Church must own up to this duty without any reservation if she must make the most out of the lives of the youths.

The Youth- The Object and Subject of New Evangelisation

Young people are good news for the world but that is not enough, there are good reasons to worry about how to make the Good News of Our Lord Jesus Christ become good news for them. In this modern era in which young people are seeking something more and are open to spirituality, there is need to educate them about meeting God in their inner selves. There is need to teach the young people about interiority. Paradoxically, this will be achieved when the Church facilitates the discovery of their own frailness. This informed the position of Gabriel Ringlet, then vice-president of the University of Louvain in Belgium, who in 1994 asserted that;

I think that it is urgent today, to teach about frailness; at home, in school, in the Church, at work, in marriage. There is no dishonor in recognizing one's own mistakes, fissures, cracks, wrinkles... whether you are a parent, spouse, teacher, rector, priest. Even God? Yes, the unique greatness of Christianity is to be bold enough to say that God is fragile. It is bold to say that in each person, even in the most miserable, 'there is a crack that opens to another universe.' The key of teaching experience, like the key to the experience of love or of the spiritual, is in its non fulfillment... What a marvelous vocation for schools today; to invite each person to reach their own inner selves. To allow each one to discover their own promised land; to encourage each one to speak; to help each one to descend to their most secret truth. (Gabriel Ringlet, at the Euro Lasallian Congress, March 4-6, 1994, as quoted in the magazine *Action Educative Lasallienne* number 49, pp. 39 - 40.)

It should be reiterated that to humanize is to evangelize already. The Church must be convinced that to work in educating young persons is already to prepare them in the faith; the Church evangelizes when she awakens in young people the conviction that reflects the value of their existence and the sublime truth that it is their human destiny when they help others to find the truth, to win their own freedom, to know how to listen, to love, to serve others, when they are instilled with the love of justice, fraternity, fidelity.

The call to evangelise the young is imperative and requires detailed commitments. It is in the everyday where we should meet young people. This mission becomes even more pertinent in areas that experience a good measure of poverty and human suffering.

The mission of evangelizing the young people targets three main things; to see reality, to be moved and; to engage in transformative action. (Alvaro R. E. (2013) Young People and the New Evangelization. *AXIS: Journal of Lasallian Higher Education* 4, no. 3 (Institute for Lasallian Studies at Saint Mary's University of Minnesota)).

- **To see reality**, means to be up to date with what is happening in our world, to read newspaper and see or listen to the news, not just out of mere curiosity, but to discover God's action in our history. This is not something theoretical or far away, the Church needs to touch that reality and see that young people touch it as well. Without concrete experiences, the greatest truths become nothing more than smoke.
- **To be moved**, means to make our own the suffering of our neighbors. For example, those hundreds of displaced persons in Nigeria who have been moved far from their homes by the activities of insurgents and terrorist herdsmen. To be moved is to "suffer with"; it is to be sensitive to all forms of injustice, poverty and suffering. Jesus was not afraid to show his compassionate side when He encountered the multitude that were like sheep with a shepherd (Mark 6:34), or when He encountered the widow of Nain who was burying her only son (Luke 7:14), or when He was informed about Lazarus, his friend, he was moved to tears (John 11:35). This should lead the young people to "show their compassionate side" when they face any kind of human sorrow.

To engage in transformative action, is the ultimate step and the most important one. Without acting, seeing and being moved are just good intentions and sentimentality. It is about helping each young person to be like Jesus, in the end a "man for others," putting the needs of others before one's own personal interests.

If the message of Christ must make meaning to the young people, then it is important for the Church to get to know their world and to make an effort to inculturate in it. The Church must come to terms with the needs of the contemporary youths, their anxieties, questions, desires, hopes and with such understanding, offer them the Gospel which is always Good News. It is important to make the Gospel relevant to the young people; the Gospel should be a lived experience. This is necessary because young people lose interest in the Christian message to the extent that it is presented to their minds as an ideology, something imposed from the outside by way of authority, or deductively starting from principles with no relation to concrete life. Young people today, living as they do in globalized cultures characterized by the incessant change of perspectives, in a society often marked by financial insecurity, by the glorification of violence, by immediate satisfaction, have difficulty in finding support to articulate the story of their own lives that give meaning, direction and purpose to their youthful dreams. Therefore, the principal role of the Church is to help each young person to feel that they are loved, appreciated, blessed, and that they are important to and needed by others.

The New Evangelization for young people and for those who mentor them should be a call to return to the Gospel and to discover that the central core of Christian faith is a personal encounter with Jesus Christ which leads to a community of disciples. There is every need to emphasize that a community of faith is not founded only in doctrinal, liturgical or moral institutions but above all in persons who have had the same experience. This is what the disciples proclaim: "what we have seen and heard ..." (1 John 1:3).

The evangelization of the modern day youth has assumed a complex nature and hence, the desired result may not be attained using crude and traditional methods. The mission of the Church regarding the young is to be companions on the search; to be humble guides who aid in the discovery of a path and in finding meaning in life. Rather than teachers who teach from above or judges who judge and condemn from outside, Christians are called to be brothers and sisters who mentor young people from the inside, sharing with them the basic experience of a God who is

always greater than human thoughts and who escapes human definitions, but who in Jesus Christ was manifested as someone who was close, tender, affective and devoted to the needy.

The contemporary youths need more than theories, testimonies and signs that may be disconnected; they need to be open to the transcendent. The invitation of Our Lord Jesus for Christians to become children of God is an invitation for Christians to open themselves to the world of grace, tenderness, hugs, affection in the manner that children experience these things. Certainly the young evangelized by the Church today need above all a kind word, a gesture that reaches to their heart and it is there they will find God and open themselves to their brothers and sisters in need. The challenge will be to know how to unite this close and understanding posture with the prophetic word and the bold gesture which spring from the same love.

With the new evangelization, the Church incorporates the concerns, worries and challenges of the contemporary youths in an effort to take the message of Christ to them. This becomes very effective when the individual youths are transformed and they reach out to transform others; there is a graduation from being evangelized to becoming evangelizers and ardent witnesses to the Word of God.

Evaluation and Conclusion: Theological Implications of Evangelizing the Modern Youth

In recent times, there is an increasing worry to return to a theology that adopts narrative language. By the influence of Greek 'logos', theological discourse came into being as a narrative that ended up being an abstract formulation. With the growing concern to evangelize the young people of modernity, the Church is invited to adopt a theological method that is not merely narrative but also concrete, friendly and experiential. If Jesus was able to engage in narrative theology it was because he spoke about what he had seen and heard in private with the Father. This should be the language of the Church if she seeks to reach the hearts of youth. A language of men and women who live lives with meaning, who have discovered God as their

absolute, who live their own vocation of preferential service of the poor, deeply and joyfully, able to mentor young people in their ambiguous but sincere searching for the transcendent and for service.

The world today, particularly the world of youth, extends an invitation to share with them a renewed face of God and the result of our personal and familiar experience with Him. It is obvious that a door is opened for the Church today, a door of a vocational culture which the *Instrumentum Laboris* has proposed to the Church - fostering a culture of life understood as vocation and this was also the idea presented by Father Pascual Chavez in his intervention:

To live this vocational culture requires an effort to develop some attitudes and special values: the promotion and defense of the sacred value of human life, trust in yourself and in your neighbor, inferiority what helps you to discover in yourself and in others the presence and the action of God, availability to feel responsible for and to participate in the good of others with a posture of service and gratuity, the value of dreaming and desiring greatness, solidarity and responsibility towards others, especially the needy. (Rev. Pascual Chavez Villanueva, S.D.B., Rector Major of the Salesian Society of St. John Bosco (Salesians), President of the Union of Superiors General (U.S.G.) while at the XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of the Bishops, The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith (October 7-28,2012)

The Church should identify with and evangelize the youths starting from three points as follows:

- i. Immersion:** an invitation to always keep in mind your own reality, to immerse ourselves in the world of the young and to enter into dialogue with them.
- ii. A Systemic View:** this is different from a Thomistic view that analyzes things in a linear way and by cause and effect. The systemic view states that a system is made up of independent elements and it presents us with a system that interacts with the environment. In reality, both of these views are needed: that of linear transmission of the historical heritage and that which emerges from perplexity affected by the range of mutations and by the interactions we are called to establish.

iii. Individualization: because each individual manages his or her own faith without worrying so much about heritage received as about lived personal experience.

Evangelizing the young people today with their new language helps the Church to discover the new paths of the New Evangelization and Christians are encouraged to help the youths find "reasons for living and hoping" as Vatican II reminds Christians. (Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, par. 31) Christians should share with the youths a renewed face of God, the result of their personal experience and their familiarity with Him. But this cannot remain solely on the level of personal tranquility and pacification. In drinking from the spring of the encounter with Christ, the youth must discover also the transforming strength of the Gospel that opens the eyes of the world to their crucified brothers and sisters, those who suffer due to poverty, oppression, violence, hunger, unemployment, loneliness ... those who have no future. In this way, the youths get evangelized and with their transformed manner of living, they evangelize others.

+Ernest Obodo

Auxiliary Bishop of Enugu Diocese

YOUTH AND THE FUTURE OF NIGERIA

BY

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THE VICE CHANCELLOR,

NNAMDIAZIKIWE UNIVERSITY AWKA,

PROTOCOL

Young people play a crucial role in the prospect for development and should be included in all National Development Plans and Programmes. But reality shows that attention to youth has not been sufficient and more need to be done considering the practical implications of shifting perceptions of youth and the role they can play in the society. The conceptual issues related to the barriers to effective youth participation in national development include; lack of education, unemployment, extreme poverty and institutional resistance.

You can control your future if you want to. This is so because you have the power to control and manage your thoughts to your own advantage or disadvantage. As you think in your heart, so you are. You can change the direction of your whole life if you wish. You are your own self driver with your brain as your steering and your mind as your eyes. Just like the vehicle driver, if you lose consciousness of yourself or lose control of your steering, you are bound to crash.

As the sole driver, you will either drive yourself to safety or to destruction, to success or to failure. The choice is yours. A good driver that is determined to reach his destination on time and alive too must be focused. In addition, he must be very careful to avoid all obstacles and distractions along the way and focus all his attention on his destination. Thus, you can therefore effect a positive change in your life by thinking success, dreaming bigger than your present condition, being diligent, having a strong belief in yourself to succeed come what may, striving earnestly to be above average, inculcating and developing the right attitude to life's situations and circumstances you can change your situations from bad to good, worse to better and better to best.

The Almighty God created you in His own image and likeness and commanded you to subdue the earth and occupy. To be in control of your future requires that you do

not only think success, but you also act success.

In the struggle for independence in Nigeria, youths were very much pivotal in the efforts. The youths were ready for leadership as at 1960 and they emerged leaders at very young age at independence in the likes of Nnamdi Azikiwe and Tafawa Belewa. Over the years, many people all over the world both in our dear country and overseas have accomplished numerous feats while in their youthful age. People like General Yakubu Gowon, who was born in 1934, joined the Nigerian army at age 20 in 1954. After training, he was promoted to second lieutenant position and later headed the Nigerian military government and was also commended for his work as Nigerian foreign minister. Sir Ahmadu Bello was born in 1910, and he was strongly engaged in Nigerian politics as early as 1934 at age 24. Persons like Funmilayo Ransome Kuti who was born in 1900 was one of the premier female leaders in Nigeria. She defended the rights of women and also championed the struggle against the military government human right violations in Nigeria.

Perhaps the education they received was functional and they were eager to lead. The youths in the 1960s and 1970s had various skills and were quite hardworking and the ones that had formal education were few and they had opportunities for white collar jobs. In that period, societal vices were very limited; crimes were hardly heard because the youths were physically, socially, mentally and psychologically engaged in active productive activities. No one that engages in energy sapping job like farming would still have the strength to engage in robbery, kidnapping and any form of banditry. The society was much safer than now and population was quite small, such that in a community, everyone is known down to ones lineage with family values and individuals tendencies and capabilities.

"NIGERIAN YOUTHS AND THE FUTURE IN THE PREVAILING STATE OF THE NATION"

The narrative seems to have changed for worse. With a population of over 200 million people, 93.7 million are below the poverty line and Nigeria was declared the poverty headquarters. Youth without any productive activity abound in the society and many are graduates who are patiently waiting for the inexistent white collar

jobs. In the midst of frustration and quest for survival, many of the youths have ventured into nefarious activities like robbery, stealing, kidnapping, internet scam among others. Lots of youths now give away themselves to drugs and the country has acquired a bad reputation because of the activities of the youths related to internet scams perpetuated within the country and in the Diaspora. In the streets, youths are seen during working hours doing no productive venture.

As the future of every family is dependent on the quality and not the quantity of the youths in that family, so is the future of any nation tied to the quality and not quantity of the youths in that nation. It is upon this backdrop that the various tertiary institutions are established to raise highly developed youths academically, morally, psychologically and skilfully to meet the developmental needs of the country hence they are regarded as the future leaders.

(1) The Future of the Nigerian Youths in Relation to Employment (Government)

One of the fundamental indices of any failed family is the inability of the parents of that family to provide the educational, health, moral and other relevant needs of the children in that family. This, of course, is a very big disappointment to the children and they must feel discontented and this has been the basis of all the troubles parents have experienced and are still experiencing in their homes. The greatest problem facing Nigeria is mass unemployment which poses a threat to the future of the Nigerian graduate youths.

There is a brazen discontent in Nigeria among the youths. The youths are not happy with our leaders for their abject neglect over the years. Millions of our youths annually pass out of their institutions of learning without any hope of securing employment either in the federal, state or local government establishments. They appear hopeless and helpless and these are the productive youths that will be the leaders of tomorrow. Unemployment among the youths is a hydra-headed evil that breeds poverty and poverty breeds all kinds of vices like robberies, kidnapping and other forms of terrorism prevalent among our youths. This is so because these youths want to survive; they want to give expression to themselves and if possible, force the nation to give them a sense of belonging to their fatherland.

(2) The Future of the Nigerian Youths in Relation to Employment in the Private

sectors

The private sector is composed of two categories namely:

A. The organised private sector such as the financial institutions, multinational companies and firms, etc. The financial institutions are the hardest hit by the global economic melt-down. Before our very eyes, the evil wind ravaged the economy of Nigeria that was ailing, leaving all our financial institutions ravaged and shattered. The resultant effect was that many such institutions liquidated, some merged with affiliate groups, while some operated epileptically. The situation reached an unbearable height that thousands of workers were declared redundant while their gates were completely sealed against all job seekers, especially the graduate youths. This ugly trend has remained unabated till today, hence there is little hope for any graduate youth securing a job in any of the financial institutions in the country. If any should be considered for a place in any of them, the person must ride on the back of a very big stakeholder in that financial institution. How many of the youths can boast of having such people?

If any was employed at all, it was courtesy of the person's affinity with any of the members of the National Assembly or Aso Rock or a political juggernaut in Nigeria. All the various programmes being put in place by all the governments at all levels to stem down the rate of unemployment among the Nigerian youths have remained amorphous. Nothing at all has crystallised out of any of them. They remain political gimmicks only aimed at capturing the votes of the electorates. A repressive democratic practice such as being witnessed in Nigeria today, which favours only the elite to the neglect of the common people, what do you think the future holds for the Nigerian youths? A situation where the governments have no clear-cut plan on how to create jobs where the teeming youths can be absorbed leaves their future unpredictable. The same is also applicable to getting a job in any of the multinational companies.

B. The unorganised private sectors include establishments owned by one man or partnership and they differ in sizes and conditions of employment. Most of those establishments do not pay the minimum wage of Nigeria because they cannot afford it. Some give horrifying conditions of service, while a good number of them indulge

in slave labour like working as casual staff or being brutal to workers. In spite of the obnoxious nature of employment coupled with the misery pittance which they offer as wages, graduate youths still work for them instead of staying idle. This class of employers today appear to be the last hope of our graduate youths in Nigeria. What an awful development that calls for a redress if Nigeria must have a sustainable future for the youths!

(3) The Future of the Nigerian Youths in Relation to Job Creation or Self-Employment

The best form of employment is self-employment. It offers the employer enough opportunity to manage his time, resources and even his future. Since he invests his money expecting a profit, he must display all his entrepreneurship capabilities to make sure he realises his objectives. His future, to a large extent, depends on how effective he manages his establishment. As a risk bearer, he is very meticulous in taking decisions especially in the areas of finance.

This last form of employment is not an easy venture for a fresh graduate youth who may not have the needed financial and infrastructural backing unless those that come from wealthy homes. The National Directorate of Employment, which is solely established by the federal government to provide the fresh graduate youths with the needed entrepreneurship training and skill acquisition, after which the beneficiary will be given a loan range for the establishment of a small scale business is tied to bureaucratic bottlenecks, hence its impact has not been felt in job creation for the youths in the country. Many who succeeded in establishing a business has a lot of unfathomable challenges to surmount. Check out what small scale business people pass through to sustain their business on daily basis even from the IZl acclaimed IZl government officials that is meant to support and encourage these ingenuous youths.

THE NIGERIAN YOUTHS

In most societies especially in the developing world, young people constitute the majority of the population. In Nigeria, young people account for over 70 percent of the population and those between ten to twenty four years of age constitute 33.6 percent. Despite the large percentage of young population, they are excluded from social, economic and political positions. Centre for Strategic Leadership and Youth Orientation, an NGO based in Nigeria has started championing this agenda for 25% youths inclusion in governance in all strata of leadership in Nigeria.

BUILDING THE YOUTH TO BECOME PRODUCTIVE

There is the need for urgent refocus on youth development by the family, community, religious organizations and government.

A. Need for Value Re-orientation

We know that values are deep seated beliefs that influence people's actions and the rules by which they make decisions within their society. Values determine attitudes which in turn influence behaviour. Every society defines its values and engages in activities that will sustain those set of values. The 1999 Nigerian Constitution (as amended) provides for the motto, social order and national ethics which underpin the values of Nigeria. The Constitution provides that the motto of the country shall be unity and faith, peace and progress. The Constitution also provides that the state social order is founded on the ideals of freedom, equality and justice. Section 23 provides that the national ethics shall be discipline, integrity, dignity of labour, social justice, religious tolerance and patriotism. Section 24 further prescribes duties for citizens of Nigeria to abide by the constitution, respect its ideals and its institutions, the national flag, the national anthem and legitimate authorities; help to ensure the good name of Nigeria, defend the country and render national service and respect the dignity of other citizens.

However, the live experience of Nigerians is quite different from the constitutional provisions on ethics and values for the country. There is a lot of indiscipline in every facet of life in the country. Integrity is no longer cherished by many people. The get rich quick syndrome and pursuit of easy money has reduced the dignity of labour. There is high level of religious intolerance and the love for the country is waning. There is therefore the need for a comprehensive re-orientation through well thought out research; the creation of new compelling stories of Nigeria, the Nigerian dream with publications, documentaries and slogans that resonate with the Nigerian people while building institutions based on values.

B. Leadership Training for Youth

It is well known that leadership is one of the major problems militating against the development of Nigeria. Meanwhile, it is possible to train leaders. It has been

documented that everyone has the potential, at least to some degree, to become a visionary leader that can help create a desired future. It has been proven that leaders can be trained to become top strategists who will be able to envision the future and help to map out strategies on how to get there. Unfortunately, there are not many organizations, institutions and governments doing any serious leadership development. It is in recognition of this gap, I have started a transformative movement in my University as the Vice Chancellor in a vision we tagged ^Project 2000 which is aimed at making sure that Nnamdi Azikiwe University becomes among the first 200 Universities across the globe. This project would bring the university to the state where visionary youths are produced, where graduates would use their knowledge and skills to create wealth rather than wait for jobs, where high academic standard will produce academically standard students. We are introducing real academic excellence with zero tolerance to examination malpractice, quality research, community service and administrative reforms. At the end, we can then produce leaders who will know how to mobilise others to get extra-ordinary things done in organisations and nations. They should now be able to transform values into actions; visions into realities; obstacles into innovations; separateness into solidarity and risks into rewards. Producing young dynamic, strategic and visionary leaders is the surest way to accelerate the development and transformation of our country.

My Advice to the Nigerian Youths

The time when your future is dependent on what the state would offer you is completely over. Your future now depends on what you want to make it. Destiny is a matter of choice and not a matter of chance. In other words, your destiny now lies in your hands. Education is an indispensable tool that helps an individual recognise and develop his potentials to his own advantage. Anybody who is of the opinion that education is useless because of the failure of the state in offering employment to the graduate youths should better try ignorance. It is easier to rehabilitate an educated individual than a stark illiterate. With your education and enlightenment, you now know where to go and how to get there. You can now begin to make contacts with friends with a view to fixing yourself somewhere after your graduation (with the assumption that all you are students of one institution or the other). Besides, you are in a better position to look inwards, for there still exist some virgin areas in our

economic and social life that are yet to be exploited. As much as possible, try to add a small skill to your certificate for that will enhance your chances of being employed either by yourself or by somebody else.

Remember, when you maximise your youth, you achieve your dreams. Therefore, say no to all acts of violence and militancy. Fear and honour God, respect those that are in authority over you. Obey the laws of nature and you will prosper in all your ways.

May the Almighty God brighten the future of the Nigerian Youths.

CALL TO HOLINESS

BY

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Introduction

Some years ago, St. Teresa of Calcutta during an interview was asked: "How do you feel about being called a living saint?" In response, she did not say: "Oh, I'm not really a living saint or I'm not as holy as people think." Instead, she said to the reporter: "You have to be holy in the position you are, and I have to be holy in the position God has given me. There's nothing extraordinary about being holy. It is simply a duty for you and for me." In these words, she clearly expressed the church's universal call to holiness. This call resounds throughout the pages of the Bible, beginning from the book of Genesis. In his Apostolic Exhortation on the call to holiness in today's world - "Gaudete et Exsultate" (Rejoice and be Glad], Pope Francis affirms: "The call to holiness is present in various ways from the very first pages of the Bible. We see it expressed in the Lord's words to Abraham: 'Walk before me, and be blameless.'" (Gen 17:1] In other passages of the Old Testament especially in the book of Leviticus the Lord commands his people to be holy: "Be holy, for, I the Lord your God, I am holy." (Lev. 19:2]

The Church has continued to proclaim this call all through her history. However, a renewed emphasis was made in this regard at the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965]. The fifth chapter of one of the most important documents of the Council 'the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church' {Lumen Gentium) was entitled: "The Call to Holiness". It states that the Church is holy, having been made holy by Christ who is himself the model of all perfection and who preached holiness of life to all his disciples without distinction saying: "You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." [Mt. 5:48]. It states: "The followers of Christ, called by God not in virtue of their works but by his design and grace, and justified in the Lord Jesus, have been made sons of God in baptism of faith and partakers of the divine nature, and so are truly sanctified. They must therefore hold on to and perfect in their lives that sanctification which they have received from God." In declaring the

universal nature of the call to holiness the document further asserts: "It is therefore quite clear that all Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of love, and by this holiness a more human manner of life is fostered also in the earthly society." The document equates perfection with holiness and declares that all are called to the way of perfection following the example of Jesus Christ our model.

Every call has three basic elements - the caller, the content of the call and the recipients of the call. It is obvious that God is the caller and we his children (especially the young people participating in this Seminar) are the recipients of the call to holiness. What needs clarification is the content of the call. Therefore, in this paper we shall reflect on the content of this call and the appropriate ways of responding to it. We shall proceed by examining the concept of holiness, the basis of the call to holiness, the practical ways of responding to the call to holiness, the means of growth in holiness, obstacles to holiness in today's world especially among youths, and the conclusion of the paper.

The Concept of Holiness

We shall consider this concept mainly from its biblical roots. The word 'holy' and its derivative 'holiness', are used repeatedly in the Bible. The people, things, actions, places and times that are closely related to God are regarded as holy. Israel is a holy nation and the covenant upon which it was founded is holy. When God calls, His call is holy and the messengers He sends are holy. The Scriptures which contain the record of His words are holy. Moreover, God Himself is holy. (Cf. Ex. 3:5, 19:3-7, 31:14, Lev. 19:2, Is. 6:3, Hos. 11:9, Mt. 27:52, IPet. 2:9).

In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word *kadosh* (holy) signifies being separated from the secular or profane and dedicated to God's service. It entails a strict observance of God's commandments and the avoidance of whatever is unclean and impure both from the moral and cultic point of view. God demands holiness of His people, since they are bound to Him by the Covenant. They are to live according to His word, avoiding any contact with pagan idols. Israel must be holy because Yahweh has made them "a people peculiarly his own" (Dt. 7.6, Cf. Lev. 20:26). Holiness in the Old Testament had both moral and cultic implications. The moral

pertained to the observance of the laws that guided the relationships between human beings as contained in the Ten Commandments and other laws. The cultic pertains to the observance of the rules and regulations of worship, for example with regard to the animals to be sacrificed and the various observances that were appropriate for temple worship.

When the term 'holy' is applied to God, it also connotes the idea of being separated and different. In virtue of His holiness, God is above all creatures and separated from what is contaminated or imperfect. In the words of Ralph Martin:

In one sense, 'holy' indicates the 'beyond-ness' of God. He is great beyond our comprehension. He is lifted up above all that he has made. He exceeds every superlative we can apply to him. 'Holy' captures the complete otherness of God. The holy God is different from us, a profound mystery utterly beyond our understanding. But at the same time, 'holy' sums up everything that we can know and say about God. It indicates the totality of his excellence, all the qualities of his greatness and goodness that we can gain some understanding of."

In the New Testament, the ritual or cultic aspect of holiness disappears. The emphasis is on the personal and moral aspect of holiness; material objects still have their roles, especially in the Sacraments, but on a spiritual level. In this regard, Christians are invited to imitate God's holiness by avoiding what is contaminated or impure (Cf. Rm 12:2, IPet. 1:14-16, 2Pt. 3:11-12, 1jn. 3:3). The most profound expression of the call to holiness in the New Testament is contained in Christ's statement to his disciples: 'Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.' (Mt 5:48) It is like a restatement of the message of Leviticus 19:2 "Be holy, for I the Lord your God I am holy." However, in this regard, the application of perfect or holy to God does not connote so much his otherness and separateness as in the Old Testament, but his perfect love for us. Therefore, Our Lord Jesus Christ introduces the virtue of love as the basis of holiness and perfection.

The basis of the call to holiness: How can we be called to be holy like the heavenly Father, mere mortals being called to be like their Creator? Is this not presumptuous?

It is not, because God created us in His image and likeness (Cf. Gen. 1:26-27). Therefore, if God is holy, it is in the nature of human beings to be holy. In our ability to reason, to choose good reject evil and to love we are made in God's image. Hence, He can call us be like Him. Of course, we can never completely be like Him in his attributes such as omniscience, omnipotence and eternity. However, he created us to be like him in a way that is fitting for us. We are to be like Him in a human fashion, manifesting His love, goodness, purity, justice, beauty and other qualities in our human lives.

Although human nature has been affected by original sin, divine grace which is the basic means of attaining holiness has been provided through the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. The call to holiness is not an option, but a command. Becoming holy is the only way that we can fulfil our God given destiny and the purpose for which we were created. St. Paul affirms: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavens, as He chose us in Him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blemish before Him." (Eph. 1:3-4) God's purpose is for us to be like Him and be in His presence forever and holiness is a basic requirement for this. This is clearly enunciated in the Letter to the Hebrews: "Strive for peace with everyone, and for that holiness without which no one will see the Lord." (Heb. 12:14)

Responding to the call to holiness

We shall now examine the various ways of responding to the universal call to holiness through love, the beatitudes and the cross/suffering.

Holiness and Love: In discussing the biblical notion of holiness, we highlighted the shift that Our Lord Jesus introduced in the New Testament with regard to God's holiness; the shift from the notion of holiness implying God's otherness, difference and distance from us to that of His love for all. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said to His disciples: "So be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Mt. 5:48) He made this statement at the end of his teaching on love as the appropriate response of his followers to their enemies. (Cf. Mt. 5:43-48)

The Greek word used for perfect is *teleios*. In the Greek language, this word has a

special usage. For instance, a victim meant for sacrifice is *teleios* if it is without blemish, also a man who has reached his full grown stature of maturity is *teleios* compared to a young boy who is yet to arrive at maturity. Against this background, the word *teleios* (perfect) used in this passage, implies the maturity of love. In other words let your love be mature and complete, just like the love of the heavenly Father who loves the good and the bad. Any way of loving that excludes enemies or anyone is not complete or mature. Therefore, holiness or perfection consists in perfect love or charity - Love of God "with our whole heart, our whole soul, our whole mind, our whole strength... and our neighbour as our self." (Mk. 12:30-31). Jesus introduced a new dimension to the commandment of love as a kind of last will and testament to his disciples when at the last supper he said to them: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. (Cf. Jn. 13:34; 15:9)

To be holy is to be loving. Hence, holiness is described in the fifth chapter of *Lumen Gentium* as "the fullness of Christian life and the perfection of love."

The document further states:

In order to reach this perfection the faithful should use the strength dealt out to them by Christ's gift, so that, following in his footsteps and conformed to his image, doing the will of the Father in everything, they may wholeheartedly devote themselves to the glory of God and to the service of their neighbor. Thus the holiness of the People of God will grow in fruitful abundance, as is clearly shown in the history of the Church through the lives of so many saints.

Our love for God is expressed through acts of worship and the readiness to obey His commandments and accomplish His will. As Our Lord Jesus states: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." (Jn. 14:15) The love of neighbour expresses our love for God and it is manifested through acts of benevolence and mercy. It involves willing the good of our neighbour and doing every thing possible to enhance the fulfillment of God's purpose in their lives. It involves offering of both spiritual and material help to the needy. The absence of the love of neighbour signals the absence

of God's love in one's life. As St. John affirms: "If someone says he loves God, but hates his brother, he is a liar. For he cannot love God, whom he has not seen, if he does not love his brother whom he has seen. The command that Christ has given is this: "whoever loves God must love his brother also." (1jn. 4:20) The love of neighbour is the fulfillment of the whole law (Cf. Gal. 5:14, Rm. 13:8-10) Paul outlines the qualities of this love in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. The love of neighbour is made possible when we view our neighbour through God (seeing them as the image of God) and love them for the sake of God.

Pope Francis describes the account of the final judgment that Our Jesus gives in Matthew 25:31-46, as the 'great criterion' of holiness:

If we seek the holiness pleasing to God's eyes, this text offers us one clear criterion on which we will be judged. 'I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' (Mt. 25:35-36) Holiness then is not about swooning in mystic rapture. As Saint John Paul II said: 'if we truly start out anew from the contemplation of Christ, we must learn to see him especially in the faces of those with whom he himself wished to be identified.

Holiness and the Beatitudes:

The beatitudes contain the core of Jesus' preaching, the essential elements of the Gospel. They "depict the countenance of Jesus Christ and portray his charity. They express the vocation of the faithful... they shed light on the actions and attitudes characteristic of the Christian life". According to Pope Francis:

Jesus explained with great simplicity what it means to be holy when he gave us the Beatitudes (Cf. Mt 5:3-12; Lk 6:20- 23). So if anyone asks: "What must I do to be a good Christian?" the answer is clear. We have to do, each in our own way, what Jesus told us in the Sermon on the Mount. The word 'happy' or 'blessed' thus becomes a synonym for 'holy'. It expresses the fact that those faithful to God and his word, by their self-giving, gain true

happiness.

The beatitudes confront us with decisive choices about earthly goods and they purify our hearts in order to teach us to love God above all things. They challenge us to go against the current and do things differently from the world. They turn the values of the world upside down and promote attitudes that run contrary to the logic of the world. The beatitudes invite us to be holy through - humility, readiness to mourn with others and identify with the suffering, meekness, thirst and hunger for holiness, mercy, purity of heart, readiness to make peace and the endurance of persecution with joy.

Holiness and Suffering/the Cross

There is a close link between holiness and suffering. The process of becoming holy can lead to suffering because of the level of resistance that needs to be overcome in us before we can live the holy life that the Lord has called us to. A lot of pruning is needed to transform us and make us fruitful. As Jesus affirms: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. He takes away every branch in me that does not bear fruit, and every one that does bear fruit he prunes so that it bears more fruit." (Jn 15:1-3) The Lord uses painful experiences in our lives to prune us.

Jesus Christ told his disciples to expect suffering in following Him. He says: "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it." (Mt. 16:24-25) This is a call to total abandonment of oneself, will, desires, plans and purposes and a total acceptance of God's will and its consequences. According to Ralph Martin, this self denial involves:

Saying no to the twisted, bent, shriveled tendencies of our fallen nature and yes to the straightening process. We experience the pain of saying no to temptations that may really attract us - things like lying, stealing, and impurity. We also experience pain in saying yes when the Spirit prompts us to express love, praise of God, humble service, generous giving, and loyalty in new and uncomfortable ways. There are times too when we we'd simply

'rather not'.... Self-denial also means the pain of saying no to the world, insofar as the world is organized against the kingdom of God.

The cross involves the persecutions we experience for being Christians and for doing God's will, it also involves our daily sufferings by way of ill-health, discomforts, poverty and other deprivations. If these are borne with faith and trust they constitute a positive response to the call to holiness. These difficulties become means of sanctification. According to the Fathers of the second Vatican Council:

In a special way also, those who are weighed down by poverty, infirmity, sickness and other hardships should realize that they are united to Christ, who suffers for the salvation of the world; let those feel the same who suffer persecution for the sake of justice.... Accordingly all Christians, in the conditions, duties and circumstances of their life and through all these, will sanctify themselves more and more if they receive all things with faith from the hand of the heavenly Father and cooperate with the divine will, thus showing forth in that temporal service the love with which God has loved the world.

The means of growth in holiness

- 1) God's grace and faith in God.
- 2) A strong desire for holiness.
- 3) Frequent participation in the Sacraments and the Liturgy.
- 4) Daily personal prayers.
- 5) Frequent Scripture/Spiritual reading and meditation.
- 6) Recollection and retreat.
- 7) Mortification and penance.
- 8) Detachment from people and things that lead into sin.
- 9) Spiritual direction.

10) Spiritual combat and vigilance against the devil.

Obstacles to holiness in today's world especially for youths

- 1) The loss of the sense of sin.
- 2) Instability in family life.
- 3) Scarcity of role models.
- 4) The media.
- 5) Peer group pressure and influence.
- 6) Discouragement.

In order to overcome the obstacles that hinder people's response to the call to holiness, the Church needs to make more efforts in her pastoral ministry to develop the people's faith through improved catechesis and faith formation programs for both the young and the old, the married and unmarried; putting into consideration their special needs and challenges. The call to holiness needs to be constantly reiterated and put at the center of the church's pastoral life. St. John Paul II in his Apostolic Letter: "Novo Millennio Ineunte" (At the beginning of the new millennium, January 6, 2001) maintained that all pastoral initiatives must be set in relation to holiness; with the aim of giving the members of the church "a genuine 'training in holiness', adapted to people's needs. This training must integrate the resources offered to everyone with both the traditional forms of individual and group assistance, as well as the more recent forms of support offered in associations and movements recognized by the Church."

Conclusion

The call to holiness is a call that is universal, and our response to it affects every aspect of our lives. It is not a mere admonition or suggestion but a command that the Lord has given to all Christians. Its most explicit version in the Old Testament is in the book of Leviticus: "Be holy, for I, the Lord your God I am holy" (Lev. 19:2), and in the New Testament in the Gospel of Matthew: "Be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect." Holiness has a dynamic character and it is a lifelong project.

According to Renato Perino: "It is never definitively, completely or suddenly achieved, but is only approached through a lifelong time of long, hard struggle." Because of human frailty and the reality of sin, sometimes we fall short of our target, but we should not be discouraged. We need to rise up, repent of our sins and continue with the struggle. In the words of Benedict XVI: "Holiness does not consist in never having erred or sinned. Holiness increases the capacity for conversion, for repentance, for willingness to start again and, especially, for reconciliation and forgiveness.... Consequently, it is not the fact that we have never erred but our capacity for reconciliation and forgiveness which makes us saints. And we can all learn this way of holiness."

Nobody should be afraid of holiness, it is not beyond our reach. Neither is it meant for the clergy and religious alone. Moreover, holiness does not necessarily entail the accomplishment of anything extraordinary but it involves living our Christian life to the full and responding to the law of love, by loving God with all our hearts and loving our neighbours as Christ has loved us.

The Church has provided us with various means of responding to this call. Let us therefore, avail ourselves of these opportunities in order to respond positively to this call. Relying on God's help, let us all strive to be holy. Let us have faith in God who has made this call and in our God given ability to be holy; for as St. Paul affirms: We can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. (Cf. Phil. 4:13)

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SURVIVING HARSH ECONOMIC REALITY IN NIGERIA

BY

SIR. SUNNY NWOSU (KSS, MIOD)

It is a common knowledge that things are not as they should be with our economy. There are many challenges.

The needed infrastructure is not there. The roads are very bad and power remains a very big drawback for a struggling economy. Our eateries spend 45% of their operating cost on generating sets and diesel. Unemployment is high and growing yearly. The public schools are nothing to write home about. The quality of graduates is low with a lot of them actually unemployable.

The banks lend to real sector sparingly and that at a very high interest that makes profit nearly impossible. Nigerians also have developed insatiable appetite for foreign goods and services. This weakens local institutions and lower the value of our naira. A lot of foreign exchange is spent on foreign education, medical tourism, leisure, imported items etc

Insecurity has suddenly risen to a level of threat to economic stability of our nation. This is on the back of inconsistencies in policies by the government.

All these and more are the realities of our time as a nation.

The truth however is that this same economically hostile environment has nurtured great businesses like GTB, Seplat, MTN, Flour Mills etc.

The same harsh economically challenging environment has produced millionaires and billionaires. It has even produced the richest man in Africa and the richest black

woman in Africa.

The main challenge therefore is to look beyond the challenges. It is time to put on the right attitude to survive these challenges. The age-long adage is that no matter how serious a famine is, a seasoned farmer will not eat his seedlings. Any attempt to yield to such temptation will terminate the hope of future harvest.

The first step is the ability to save money over time and invest the money in productive ventures. That's what the farmers have done throughout history to sustain mankind. Investment enhances economic growth. It helps to create jobs, fix infrastructural decay, more products, business expansion, social security etc. Investment also rewards the investor handsomely via returns (dividend) and wealth creation/enhancement.

That is what the capital market is all about. It is a market for pulling savings (capital) together to fund economic ventures.

Knowledge and Attitude are two great keys or critical tools to survive these harsh times. It is in this light that I share with you the following:

1. Laws of Finance
2. Lessons of Life.

LAWS OF FINANCE

There are two types of Laws of finance:

A. LAW OF POVERTY.

B. LAW OF WEALTH.

A. LAW OF POVERTY:

This law states that work alone or work under someone and remain poor for the rest of your life. 95% of people in the world are living under this law. The people under this law make use of their credentials, they have ego, they seek for job, they

have someone called boss, they receive salary which is a fixed amount.

These people are called the working class. They always look for job.

B. LAW OF WEALTH

This law states that work with a team or group of people and grow wealthy. It is just 5% of people in the world that are living under this law. The people under this law make use of their potentials, and they are called the thinking class. They think of what to offer to the society and in turn make money. These people earn their money which is income and it is not a fixed amount.

The difference between these laws is that the people under the **LAW OF POVERTY** don't make use of opportunity while those under the **LAW OF WEALTH** make use of any opportunity that comes their way. The wealthy ones make use of opportunities.

Money does not respond to qualifications.

Otherwise, the wealthiest people would have been Ph.D holders.

Money does not respond to age. Otherwise, the world's oldest twins would have been the richest.

It is not about your degree

It is all about what you do after the degree.

Have you noticed that the First class degree holders are not the Richest

Neither are the Third class degree holders the poorest.

There is more to being wealthy than education. It requires knowledge. It requires the right mindset.

It requires a Commitment to self DISCIPLINE.

The only person holding your key to success is YOU.

The secrets to success is for you to be willing to pay the price but the challenge is

that very few are ready and willing to pay the price to succeed.

While some are partying and gisting, others are learning, planning and earning. Don't sit down and complain about where you are, it won't change anything.

If you must see changes, the person that must change is You. Learn to invest the little you have and get a mentor to teach you how to grow your money.

2. LESSONS OF LIFE

Lesson One:

An eagle was sitting on a tree resting, doing nothing.

A small rabbit saw the eagle and asked him, "Can I also sit like you and do nothing?"

The eagle answered:

"Sure, why not."

So, the rabbit sat on the ground below the eagle and rested. All of a sudden, a fox appeared, jumped on the rabbit, and ate it.

Lesson

- To be sitting doing nothing, you must be sitting very, very high up.

Lesson Two

A turkey told a bull:

"I would love to be able to get to the top of that tree, but I haven't got the energy."

The bull said:

"Well, why don't you nibble on some of my droppings?" They're packed with nutrients."

The turkey pecked at a lump of dung, and found it actually gave him enough strength to reach the lowest branch of the tree. The next day, after eating some more dung, he reached the second branch. Finally after a fourth night, the turkey was proudly perched at the top of the tree.

He was promptly spotted by a hunter who shot him of the tree.

Lesson_

- Bullshit might get you to the top, but it won't keep you there.

Lesson Three

A little bird was flying south for the winter. It was so cold; the bird froze and fell to the ground into a large field.

While He was there, a cow came by and dropped some dung on him. As the frozen bird lay there in the pile of cow dung, he began to realise how warm he was.

The dung was actually thawing him out!

He lay there all warm and happy, and soon began to sing for joy.

A passing fox heard the bird singing and came to investigate. Following the sound, the fox discovered the bird under the pile of cow dung, and promptly dug him out and ate him.

Lessons

- (1) Not everyone who shits on you is your enemy.
- (2) Not everyone who gets you out of shit is your friend.
- (3) And when you're in deep shit, it's best to keep your mouth shut!

These are profound laws and lessons to learn if we must survive these present challenges

BUILDING AND DEFENDING THE CULTURE OF LIFE

BY

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Introduction

The concept of "Culture of life" is relatively new, having been pronounced by St. Pope John Paul II in the later part of the 20th century (1990s). It defines a way of life based upon the belief that human life at all its stages from conception to a natural death is sacred, unique and irreparable. In one of his seminal encyclicals, the Holy Father had surmised that; "in our present social context, marked by a dramatic struggle between the "culture of life" and the "culture of death", there is need to develop a deep critical sense, capable of discerning true values and authentic needs..." In that document (*Evangelium vitae*, 1995), the pope not only remarked that even those who were not Catholic "can appreciate the intrinsic value of human life," but strongly appealed to each and every person, in the name of God to respect, protect, love, and serve life, every human life! According to him, only in this direction will humanity (all of us) find justice, development, true freedom, peace and happiness!

Based on this anthropological premise, culture of life opposes and challenges any and all philosophies and practices that directly or indirectly demean, harm or destroy human life throughout its course of existence. Such anti-life practices include but are not limited to the following: contraception, abortion, euthanasia, studies and experimentations which involve the use of human eggs, embryonic stem cells, and artificial reproductive techniques.

The position of the Catholic Church has not changed; every human person is created in the image and likeness of God and, as such, is intimately loved by God. In 1968, Pope Paul VI produced the prophetic encyclical (*Humanae vitae*) where the Church articulated its position on the defense of life from conception to natural death. Everyone including the unborn fetus, possesses an inviolable right to life. And as our society is experiencing the dangerous encroachment of the culture of death from without and within, and with the increase in the abuses of life, love, marriage and family life the world-over, all people of goodwill should stand up to defend culture of life.

Finally, the Catholic Church's position is that following are not acceptable nor permissible anti-life practices: contraception, induced abortion, sterilization, euthanasia, value-free and contraceptive-based sexuality education, "menstrual regulation", experimentation on the human genome and embryos, cloning, patenting of human life, transplants of the brain and the gonads from one person to another, the practice of masturbation, homosexuality, and lesbianism. Similarly not permissible are technologies used in the treatment of infertility or transatlantic biotechnology businesses such as: obtaining a sample of seminal fluid by masturbation; artificial insemination (husband or donor); In-vitro fertilization (IVF); Zygote Intra-fallopian Transfer (ZIFT); Intracytoplasmic Sperm Injection (ICSI); Ovum donation; "Surrogate" uterus; Human egg trafficking; Embryonic stem cell harvest and trafficking of foetal body parts, and other methods of artificial (assisted) reproduction

Our presentation will deploy MS Powerpoint slides to expand the issues above in order to enlighten participants, and to ignite in them the mindset to pursue personal

happiness in a manner that respects life, love, marriage and family in their respective vocations in life

EXPLORING OPPORTUNITIES IN DIGITAL MEDIA

BY

MUYIWA MATULUKO

Techpoint Africa, Editor-in-Chief and Co-founder

This article is an extremely abridged version of a presentation delivered by Muiyiwa Matuluko, Techpoint Africa Editor-in-Chief and co-founder, at the 2019 National Youth Seminar organised by the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria in Awka, Anambra. By the time you are done reading this article, over 2000 hours of video content would have been uploaded on YouTube, 15 million photos shared via WhatsApp and at least 1500 people would have joined Facebook for the first time. Over 2000 new websites would have been published globally and at least 1000 transactions worth a combined minimum of N40,000 should have been completed online in Nigeria.

Without a doubt, technology, and more specifically digital media, has had a dramatic effect on how we live, maintain relationships and conduct business. Little wonder that the most valuable companies in the 21st century — like Facebook (which owns WhatsApp and Instagram), Alphabet (parent of Google which owns YouTube) — are those which leverage the power of digital media. Many of them are worth hundreds of billions of dollars; some are even worth trillions.

Yet, in the midst of all this wealth, global poverty and unemployment rates continue to rise. In Nigeria for instance, the unemployment rate rose from 18% in 2017 to 23% as at the third quarter of 2018. Still, we churn out an average of 500,000 fresh graduates every year, about half of which are deemed 'unemployable'.

It is often said that Nigeria's unemployment problem does not stem from a lack of jobs but rather, from a dearth of skills. Many employers insist that they have myriad

roles to fill but they can't find the right candidates to occupy them. Most job-seekers do not have the skills employers require and they are not willing to commit finances to training, lest they become a shortterm stepping stone.

The story is similar all over the world. In the 21st century job market, certificates are becoming increasingly less valuable than 'sabificates'. Believe it or not, the days of "what you have" and "who you know" are numbered. In their place, 'what you know' and "what you can do" are gradually taking over. If Nigeria's youth are ever going to completely overcome the malaise of unemployment, it will be through the revolutionary power of digital media.

Samuel is a 400-level undergraduate of Microbiology at one of Nigeria's federal universities in Oyo state. Currently on a 6-month break from school, he is working as a temp with a new media company based in Lagos. Since he discovered his passion for digital journalism in second year, he has taken advantage of periodic breaks to get similar temporary placements at such companies. Each time, he has never had to produce a CV to get a job. Instead, he has maintained an online portfolio that proves his skills, most of which he gained either taking online courses, watching YouTube videos or on previous jobs.

Samuel has only one year left in school but it is already guaranteed that he will get a full-time job by the time he graduates.

Ayomide's story is notunlike Samuel's. Only thathe dropped outfrom school in 300-level to focus full-time on his chosen career path; programming. He stumbled into programming in his second year when he and a friend decided to start an online business. They could not find anyone to build a proper web app for them on a student budget so, they decided to do it themselves.

Armed with free PDF tutorials on PHP, and thanks to a 6-month ASUU strike, Ayomide was able to learn the basics of web programming. The rest, as they say, is history. Today, he is an internationally-accomplished programmer who has worked for American companies, from the comfort of his base in Akure, Nigeria.

For Lynda, the path to getting on the international job market wasn't as 'dramatic'. Having graduated with a degree in computer science at a Nigerian university, Lynda went on to pursue a career in the same field at various indigenous companies for about 4 years. Never one to rest on her oars, she continued to improve her skill, even while on the job, with the help of online resources, online communities and

lots of practice.

Soon enough, her passion for travelling and new experiences drew her to software engineering opportunities abroad. With the help of Google and niche online job search platforms like Stack Overflow Jobs and Honeypotio, she was able to secure a remote job and eventually a full-time job in Germany.

Since her secondary school days, Didi has always had a passion for matchmaking. She always found excitement in playing Cupid with her friends and classmates. This hobby continued for many years until she realised that matchmaking was something she could build a business out of. After getting some relevant certifications, she decided to start Lagos Matchmaker, a privacy-focused matchmaking platform for serious-minded singles above the age of 25. Her company utilises the anonymity of digital media like Instagram to deliver her privacy-focused service.

What do Samuel, Ayomide, Lynda and Didi have in common? They all take advantage of the revolutionary power of digital media. That same power is likely in your hands (or your pocket) right now.

If you own a smartphone, you are among the privileged 13% to 20% of Nigerians who have access to a device that is millions of times more powerful than the computers that took man to the moon.

So the next time you are scrolling through Instagram and you see a funny video, a nice dress for sale or an inspiring quote, the next time you send an SMS to vote for your favourite Big Brother housemate, the next time you watch Burna Boy's latest music video on YouTube, remember that someone somewhere is benefitting from your engagement.

Are you also taking advantage of the opportunities in digital media

SAFE ENVIRONMENT IN THE WAKE OF CLERICAL ABUSE: THE ROLE OF THE CATHOLIC YOUTH

By

Very Rev Fr Mark Omorovie Ikeke, PhD ¹

1. Introduction

Thank God, those who committed these horrible crimes are not the majority of priests, who carry out their ministry with fidelity and generosity. I ask young people to let themselves be inspired by this vast majority. And if you see a priest at risk, because he has lost the joy of his ministry, or seeks affective compensation, or is taking the wrong path, remind him of his commitment to God and his people, remind him of the Gospel and urge him to hold to his course. In this way, you will contribute greatly to something fundamental: preventing these atrocities from being repeated. This dark cloud also challenges all young people who love Jesus Christ and his Church: they can be a source of great healing if they employ their great capacity to bring about renewal, to urge and demand consistent witness, to keep dreaming and coming up with new ideas. Pope Francis to young people in *Christus Vivit*, no 100

There is a universal call to holiness in the church. This is evidently affirmed in chapter 5 of *Lumen Gentium* (no 39) which enunciates: "Therefore in the Church, everyone whether belonging to the hierarchy, or being cared for by it, is called to holiness, according to the saying of the Apostle: 'For this is the will of God, your sanctification'¹? As number 40 of this document states, this holiness can be expressed in many ways such as living a life of genuine mercy, kindness, humility, meekness, patience and love. Each believer is called to bear the fruits of the Holy Spiritas enumerated in Galatians 5:22-23.

Whatever offends against the life of holiness that God, the source of all holiness, calls us to amounts to an abuse or misuse. The goal of this reflection is to present some key ways/tips that can help youths to safe environment to stop clerical abuse. There are great deals of statistics on the number of abuses/cases that have been committed by clerics. Many of these statistics can be found online

and so time shall not be spent here on those statistics. It is an established fact and within our days that from the western world to the countries in the Southern hemisphere to Eurasia, clerical abuses have occurred. The church has responded and much more can still be done by the clerics and lay faithful of the church to prevent and curb abuse, especially sexual abuse. Young people in particular have a great role to play. In his post-synodal exhortation to young people, Pope Francis is clear on this monstrous evil of abuse; "It is true that 'the scourge of the sexual abuse of minors is, and historically has been, a widespread phenomenon in all cultures and societies', especially within families and in various institutions; its extent has become known primarily 'thanks to changes in public opinion'. Even so, this problem, while it is universal and 'gravely affects our societies as a whole... is in no way less monstrous when it takes place within the Church'. Indeed, 'in people's justified anger, the Church sees the reflection of the wrath of God, betrayed and insulted'."

2. Definitions

The following phrases ground this paper-safe environment, clerical abuse, and Catholic Youth. The word, 'environment,' refers to all that surrounds an organism or a thing. Whatever surrounds you as a person is your environment; this includes the people around you, the places and neighbourhood in which you live, your school or place of business or career, the community in which you live and work, the church, and the entire private and public places that you enter, including the natural environment. Wherever your life as a human being is lived and celebrated is part of your environment. To be safe is to be secured from harm, danger or loss, according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary. A safe environment is one in which the human beings are protected from all forms of abuse, especially sexual abuse. The human person is created in God's own image and likeness (Genesis 1:26). It is an environment in which the human person is protected against all that offends against human dignity and rights. A safe environment, to use the words of Pope Francis is a "suitable environment" where the hopes and dreams of young people can flourish and are not

in the doctrine that the human body is created in God's image and likeness and has dignity and is to be honoured and respected. Safe environment recognises that: the human body is sacred. There are parts of the human body that are private. The human person is loved by God and has been redeemed in Christ. The human person is to be protected from all abuses. Infringement on a person's personal space is to be avoided at all cost. There are things that are permitted in marital conjugal relationship that are not permitted in other kinds of relationship/

The dictionary definition of the word, "abuse" is to use wrongly or improperly; to treat in a harmful or offensive manner or speak harshly or insultingly to. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary says abuse is "to put to a wrong or improper use (abuse a privilege), to use excessively (abuse vi alcohol), to use or treat so as to injure or damage, to attack in words.' The Gale Encyclopaedia of Medicine defines abuse as: "any action that

vii intentionally harms or injures another person." With regard to sexual abuse, the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria defines itas: "any action by which a person uses another person as an object of sexual gratification. It includes viii sexual exploitation, harassment, assault, and molestation." The bishops note that it can be physical abuse-sexual contact such as rape, stripping, caressing, lustful advances, welcome or unwelcome; verbal abuse-lewd comments, voyeuristic jokes, solicitous conversations, whistling, etc; nonverbal abuse-indecent gestures, exposures, display of pictures and other objects." Some kinds of abusive behaviour can be found in the table below taken from Len Sperry:*

Type of Abuse	Descriptive Examples
Emotional abuse	Shaming, withdrawing, withholding approval, brandishing a weapon, menacing gestures, “cold shoulder” treatment
Verbal abuse	Threats, teasing, harassing, humiliating or derogatory comments
Physical abuse	Destruction of property or pets, hitting, scratching, spitting
Spiritual abuse	Parent and teachers using threats i.e., “God will punish you” or using guilt
Sexual abuse	Unwanted touching, fondling, or other sexual behaviour? ¹

Note that for the cleric and indeed for all, it is sinful to commit any form of abuse whether wanted or unwanted. The cleric and indeed all Christ's Faithful are called to the highest level of purity and holiness following their states of life. Clerical abuse refers to abuse committed by persons in the clerical office. A cleric in the church is a male who has been called the sacrament of holy order. He can be a deacon, a priest or a bishop.

It is important to define who the Catholic Youth is. One author says: "The young people that concern us in this study are between the ages of 18 and the early thirties. They are at the post-adolescence stage and want to

xii

become psychologically autonomous by trying to affirm their self. There are various definitions of youths in various documents. In the "African Youth Charter," youths are those from 15 to 35 years^or the "Convention on the Rights of the Child" all those below 18 are considered to be children^For the purpose of this piece, technically a catholic youth is a young person of roughly the ages of 18 to 35s (40) who have received the sacrament of baptism and is committed to his faith; and often single. In some places/parishes it is strictly from age 15 to 35. Those who are above this age bracket are to give support and partner with the youths in their works. Those within this age bracket who are married are encouraged to join catholic fathers or mothers, or catholic men or women, while not neglecting support for the youth. For practical reasons there are youths who are not baptised or are not practicing the faith, but they are allowed to participate in the catholic youth group in as far as they come to church. But such persons oughtto workto get baptised and equally live outthe faith.

3. Creating a Safe Environment to Prevent Clerical Abuse: The Role of the Youth

Abuse can happen in any area of life. While there can be abuse among equals, the abuse we are concerned about here is that of a superior, or someone in a higher spiritual position than the young person abusing the young person. When a person who is in a clerical office abuses another person, it is termed clerical abuse. When an abuse occurs, one party usually the superior party is trying to control the other person. In a relationship of

abuse that occurs, the cleric is the one in higher position. He should not have allowed the abuse to occur. Pope Francis is clear that young people are not powerless in the face of clerical abuse. The table indicates priests' types who can be involved in sexual abuse*⁷¹

Type	Description of Six Types of Clergy Sexual Misconduct
Type I	Naive or mildly neurotic; usually single victim; no cunning or intimidation; usually remorseful; good to mixed prognosis
Type II	Neurotic and self-serving, martyr -like older priests who feel unappreciated; much narcissistic entitlement with some intimidation; a number of victims; little or no remorse; guarded prognosis
Type III	Hardworking, self -defined by their ministry; some narcissistic entitlement and planning, one or two victims much guilt and rationalization; possible remorse; mixed to guarded prognosis
Type IV	Impulsive, energetic, and immature; constant boundary problem and violations of rules beyond sexual impropriety; some narcissistic entitlement; many victims; no planning or cunning; sometimes shows
Type V	Charming, grandiose, dominating, and draw loyal supporters to them; usually long-term relationship with a vulnerable victim but may involve others; much narcissistic entitlement with cunning and intimidation; no remorse; poor prognosis
Type VI	The classic sexual predator; psychopathic with narcissistic entitlement; many victims; utilizes cunning and intimidation and may physically harm victims; no remorse; extremely poor prognosis; this type also includes psychotic priests who, when untreated, act out sexual delusions and without treatment response have a very poor prognosis

All clerics need to be watchful as it can happen in any cleric's life. Young people need to be spiritually vigilant as it is possible to be abused by any cleric. A central message from "Christus Vivit," is that young persons must become what God has created them to be and should not allow the challenges they face destroy their dreams. They should be rooted in Christ and the church and fulfil their functions. Jesus is alive, Pope Francis says,

young people are alive. Young people are to keep the fire burning. Part of keeping this fire of Christ in them burning is to ensure they help to foster a safe environment for their genuine dreams to flourish in eradicating clerical abuse. Young people have a deep role to play. The Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria stated that youths have a responsibility to enthrone positive and healthy values; and use their energies for service not selfish gains^{TM1}

The following are ways to create a safe environment for young people and others and prevent them from abuse by clerics: (1) **education on sexuality/clerical abuse:** Young people should know what constitutes abuse. They should stay away from any environment that makes them vulnerable to abuse. They should be aware of ecclesiastical guidelines on safe environment and what the church requires of them. There should be continuous safe environment education for altar servers, catechism children, youth groups in all our parishes. Young people should be educated on safe environment issues that are appropriate to their ages. The Children at Risk Institute as cited relates that even children should be allowed to go through safe environment training that is proper to their age without graphic descriptions.^{'TM''}

(2) **Youths should cultivate a healthy spirituality:** They should not allow themselves to follow the glamorous, but follow Christ. Our society and culture neglect youths and their well-being. It prioritizes false images of success and wealth rather than the well-being of youth. In "Renewing the Vision", the US Catholic Bishops asserted: 'Today's youth are plunged into the distracting worlds of consumerism and technological isolation, which damages relationships including both familial ties and a spiritual relationship with Jesus Christ. Our secular culture does not offer the proper economic, spiritual, and personal tools to help youth become disciples of Jesus Christ. In short, our youth are settling for less in a society that ignores them. We must show our youth that the Church maintains a culture of love and discipleship. Our challenge is to show youth the fullness a life of Catholic

xix

Christian discipleship entails.' A religious education, especially catechesis for healthy youth spirituality is necessary. If youths are well grounded in healthy spirituality, it will become easier for them to resist an abusive environment and advances from clerics who want to abuse them. Youths should live decent and modest lifestyles in the way they dress, etc. Like other members of Christ faithful they are called to holiness, and they should exhibit non-seductive lifestyles in words, speech and deeds.

(3) Parish churches and houses should be structured in such a way that they prevent abuse. Interactions of young people with the cleric should take place only in the designated places. Young people such as altar servers and girls should not be alone with clerics in secluded places. A young person should not allow himself/herself to be left alone with a cleric in the sacristy or office or other secluded places with the doors closed. Transparency should be the watchword. Your visit to the mission house should be within proper guidelines spelt out in diocesan documents.

(4) Proper management of stress: Priests are often vulnerable to stress and can even suffer from burn-out. Improper management of stress can make a cleric vulnerable and weak. It can make him think the way to relieve himself is sexual pleasure from others, taking to alcohol, over indulgence in food, etc. Clerics need to watch themselves and properly recreate regularly to stay above stress and boredom. Dr George Manalel VC writes: "In their ministry, priests may experience certain frustrations, conflicts and pressures. Stress must either be controlled and used to best advantage, or it will wear you down. Commitment to the vocation, rest and recreation, sharing problems through healthy interpersonal relationship and personal prayer are the most effective means for stress management in priestly ministry.""" Young people should be sensitive to clerics who work among them for signs of stress, and positively encourage them to recreate well. Young people should guide against stress and boredom that can make them vulnerable to clerical abusers. Young people should be trained to recognise abusive patterns in the environment in which they meet with church ministers and others.

(5) Young people should not hesitate from speaking to church authorities if they feel abused or see other persons being abused. Nobody has a right to abuse you. Your human dignity and rights should be protected by those who minister to you. Abuse of children or young persons is very hurtful, painful, and scandalous and brings shame. We all have a duty to protect against abuse. The Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria has regulated as follows that alleged sexual misconduct should be reported by those who feel they have been wronged or that their rights have been injured and in the case of minors those below 16 years by their parents/guardians. The report should be made to the diocesan bishop of his duly appointed delegate in this matter?" They should know that they should not

allow their sexual dignity and personhood to be violated.

(6) Don't feel guilty because you refuse the advance of a cleric who helped and supported you. Young people who have been supported or helped by a cleric should not see themselves as ungrateful if they refuse and turn down the abusive demands of a cleric. You are obligated to turn down the request. Whatever support you received from a cleric was done in charity to you. Some young persons think that they have to reward the cleric by responding illicitly to the demands of the cleric. Grooming behaviours (in showering gifts and enticements) on the part of clerics are to be guided against.

(7) It is possible for young people to enjoy genuine and positive friendship with clerics within appropriate spiritual and legitimate boundaries. They should be mindful of what our bishops admonished when they wrote:

The priest cultivates warm, healthy friendships and good adult relationships with priests and laymen and women. These relationships do not become exclusive or secretive. He respects boundaries in these personal and/ or professional relationships. He is at home, at peace, comfortable with his celibacy, even as he experience the sacrifice and difficulties it entails. He meets and minister in appropriate place or setting, and at appropriate times. While the human experience of intimacy is important, and can serve as a pathway to God, this does not involve touching or gestures that properly belong to courtship, engagement, and marriage. He is not overly inquisitive in counselling or overly revealing of his own feelings and emotions. He does not cross the emotional, physical, spiritual or sexual limits of someone to whom he ministers. He never initiate behaviour that is sexually stimulating and refuses it, if another initiate it. Only in the appropriate context does he share deep personal feelings. Affection in ministry is never expressed in an unethical or unprofessional way, for example, tactile way. He is prudent in showing expression of regard and in giving and receiving xxii gifts.

A young person should be worried if his relationship with a cleric takes away from the time he should be in his studies, school, business, or church. He should seek guidance and counsel from his spiritual director or guide, who should

be another cleric. He should equally take hold of his time. The following questions adopted and adapted from Dr Scully should be reflected upon by a young person in relating with clerics. Does this relationship cloud my ability to reason? Can I say no to illicit demands of a cleric? Does this relationship make me not to be available to others? Does this relationship intrude into the time the cleric should devote to prayers, and celebration of the liturgy and sacraments? Is this friendship inclusive of others and open to all? Do I feel jealous when I see a cleric who is a friend with others?^{xxi} If your relationship with a cleric takes away your time, makes you unavailable to others, intrudes into your time to fulfil your dreams, intrudes into the cleric's time, makes you jealous of others; then this is not an ideal relationship. It needs to be guarded against. You should say no to illicit demands on you.

Young people, realise that from the above you should never offer behaviours that are sexually stimulating to clerics and when the cleric offers them, turn it down. Young people, you have a right and should exercise the right to move and run away from environments in which a cleric wants to abuse you. You should seek for counselling and confession at the appropriate times laid down in the parish and avoid coming to the rectory at awkward times. These are all meant to keep the environment safe. Young people have a duty to stay away from temptations. Scripture says, "Flee away from fornication"^{**17} and other sexual sins. When it comes to sexual continence young people should be inspired by the examples of Joseph the dreamer, who resisted the wife of Potiphar, and not by the example of Delilah. Be a virtuous youth and don't tempt a cleric. You should not stimulate a cleric to evil. Be resolute and stand your ground.

(8) All those involved in ministering to young people, including clerics must be thoroughly screened and continuously monitored. Clerical abuse of children or young people normally takes place in a location. With regard to situation in the United States, McGlone and Sperry write: monitoring, educating and reducing situational triggers to ensure that minors and young people are not left alone with clerics in private locations reduces risks.^{'00'} This should be implemented everywhere. Parents and guardians of young people have a duty to ensure that their wards are properly monitored and chances of them to be alone with the young in a private location is eradicated. Young persons then need to inform their parents and

guardians of their whereabouts and locations. Young persons should inform their parents and guardians of their church and youth activities.

4. Conclusion

Though we are encouraging young people to help enhance a safe environment, the cardinal duty to prevent abuse is that of the cleric who is entrusted with sacerdotal powers. And the church is clear that when there are cases of abuse, the primary concern must be for the victim?^{TM11} I wish to draw insights from the book, *Money, Sex and Power: The Challenges of the Disciplined Life* that the cleric carries a great deal of power. This power can either be used creatively or used to destroy. The cleric should use his power to create and restore life, set people free, and bring unity to his community. I agree with Foster when he opines: "We all exercise power over others. We are all affected by the power others exercise over us. We can choose the destructive power that is used to dominate and manipulate, or we can choose the creative power that is used to lead and liberate. It is only through the grace of God that we are able to take something as dangerous as power and make it creative and life-giving."

The cleric has been bestowed with the great powers of Holy Order. He should use it following the "kenosis" example of Jesus (Philippians 2) to bring life to young persons and others not to use it to take advantage of young persons for pleasure or vainglory. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (no 1551) says: "The sacrament of Holy Orders communicates a "sacred power" which is none other than that of Christ. The exercise of this authority must therefore be measured against the model of Christ, who by love made himself the least and the servant of all. "The Lord said clearly that concern for his flock was proof of love for him."^{11XIX} Monsignor John Aniagwu cites Father Thomas Lane to note that clerical authority is not for domination but service and compassion[^]

It behoves young people to refuse to be seduced by clerics rather they should enhance the ministry of clerics with their gifts, talents and possibilities for the good of the church and the wellbeing of humanity.

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SOME THOUGHTS ON CATHOLIC YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN NIGERIAN POLITICS

by

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I do not want to waste time on the theoretical arguments as to whether it is desirable for the Youth or anyone for that matter to take part in politics. Since we tend to focus only on the very narrow definitions and perceptions of politics, it is easy to fall into the fallacy of philosophizing or wondering whether there is a perfect time for the Youth to enter politics or whether there are particular political parties to which Catholic Youth should belong. It will be akin to asking whether there are particular roads, markets, airports or vehicles that Catholic Youth should make use of. These are public goods and their utility is tied to our needs not the religious colouration especially because there are no such things as Catholic roads or markets. How Catholics use them can be debated.

I will therefore not present these reflections in a Lecture format, but make the case that we are in politics whether we like it or not. Like being in the rain or travelling in the hot sun, there are options that we can determine for ourselves, namely, that we can carry an umbrella, stand in the shade or buy an air conditioner to contain the rain or hot sun. There are certain human elements about which we cannot isolate or pigeon hole our options. The best we can do is to understand the circumstances and decide on how we shall act or not act.

We have often fallen back on the encounter between Jesus and the Pharisees who demanded to know whether they are to pay taxes to Caesar or not as a reference for the involvement of Christians in politics. According to the story, the Pharisees confronted Jesus with questions of loyalty and allegiance to civil authority by the Pharisees. Was it right, they said, to pay tax to Caesar or not? In response, Jesus said to His listeners: Render to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God (Mt.22: 21).

The meaning of this text has preoccupied many scholars of Christian involvement in politics. However, years and years of misapplication have led many Christians or

even non-Christians to assert that Jesus was telling Christians to stay off politics that belonged to Caesar and focus on spiritual matters that are of God. Yet on closer examination, nothing could be further from the truth.

As I already stated, Jesus knew that the Pharisees were not looking for an answer, nor were they genuinely interested in the truth. So Jesus took them through a line of questioning. In the end, Jesus said to them, since the coin has the image of Caesar on it, it should be given to Caesar since it is the symbol of his authority. However, Caesar on the other hand has the image of God in him and is under the authority of God the creator of heaven and earth. Therefore, since both Caesar and the coin are subordinated to God, it is logical that both he and his coin belong to God! Consequently, for the Christian, politics should be seen as an offering to God who owns Caesar, his kingdom which we ourselves are part of.

As I said, I do not wish to dwell on the theory of politics, yet, whether we like it or not, politics is like water, we cannot do without it, it is everywhere we turn, it depends on whether we will use it or drown in it. If we do not participate in the management of our own resources, others will decide on our behalf. It is only natural that we participate otherwise, others will borrow our voices and come to decisions on our behalf. Whether any member of the community turns up in the village square or not, their absence will not stop the community from arriving at decisions he or she has to live with. As Chinua Achebe said, People do not go to the village square because they cannot see the moon in their own homes, they assemble as a show of community solidarity. In the same way, we do not go to the Church just pray. Each of us can and we do pray in our homes. However, we go to Church as a sign of communion and community solidarity. Ditto politics.

Going forward, what I want to do now is to lay out what I can call rules of the thumb, some guidelines, to encourage our Catholic youth who wish to take up full and active participation in politics. Of course as I have said, there may be no Catholic markets or roads, these are all public utilities, but how a Catholic acts in those spaces should be guided by the norms of their Catholic faith. For example, there may be no Catholic market or road, but how a Catholic transacts business, drives or behaves on the highway should stand him or her out. The story of the Good Samaritan (Lk. 10: 25-37) is a story of a good Christian making the right decision on the high way. We know that things have changed very much. I believe you have seen the various social

media posts of the man in Onitsha market who is negotiating with customers, counting money, and praying the Angelus at the same time!

What I will do next is to lay down a few guidelines or rules that I believe can help any young Catholic who wishes to pursue a life in politics. The rules I lay down here are not exhaustive. There are many others that can be added based on your own experience or reflections. However, I believe that broadly, if you go with the few rules I have here, you as a Catholic can participate in politics in a way and manner that will help you manage the negotiation between the temporal powers and wealth of Caesar's kingdom and the divine kingdom to which we are citizens (Phil. 3: 20). You are free to call these KUKAH'S LAWS FOR YOUTH IN POLITICS.

I hope you can reflect on these guiding Codes either in the course of this Conference and interactions or later among your Youth groups back in your Dioceses or communities. The List or Laws is elastic but here they are.

1: Politics is a Vocation: Therefore, Listen God and His Church:

For any young person, we must make Samuel our model. Samuel as you may recall, lived in the presence of the Priest, Eli as a pupil in formation in the Temple. When he heard a strange voice over and over, he decided to seek counsel from his Master, Eli (1 Sam 3: 7-11). In the affairs of politics, it is best to listen and understand the purity of the voice that is calling you or purported to be calling you. Perhaps the voice you claim to be hearing is the voice of the devil feeding on your personal greed for power. So, here, should you feel a call to politics, pray over and over for God to help you know if this is really what He wants you to do. Often, He will lead you to an Eli, with a small e. Your Eli could be a priest, a friend, your parents, or a key politician or public office holder whom you respect. These should be your first steps.

2: Trust His will and accept Grace

In seeking to know what God wants you to do, always take your time and do not hurry God. As a child, one evening, my cousin and I wanted to go and play football. All of a sudden, our uncle decided to send us to go and buy, I think Panadol or some drug like that. There was no store in our village and we had to trek over thirty minutes to get to the small Chemist. We were in such a hurry to come back and play

because it was getting dark and we didn't want to miss our ball game so we literally ran to the shop. In our haste, we didn't get the name of the drug properly and when we got there, none of us could remember the name of the drug our uncle asked us to buy.

My cousin and I exchanged looks, each accusing and blaming the other over our predicament. In the end, we just took one drug and ran back to our uncle only to discover it was the wrong drug. We had to go back to get the right drug, but by the time we finally got back, it was too dark to play our football.

If you believe you have a call, do not hurry God. He has told us that His grace is sufficient for us (2 Cor. 2:9). Do not take the advice of only those who feed your ego. Somehow, you will know in the end if this is what God really wants you to do or if you are pursuing politics just to join the ATM queue.

3: Know yourself:

You recall what good an old Socrates said: Man, know thyself. You must examine yourself carefully and ask yourself many questions in the deep recesses of your mind in prayer. Do I have the temperament for politics? Can I manage other human beings? Am I tolerant of contrary views? How do I manage money? What makes me happy and contented? Am I manipulative? How have I handed responsibilities given to me in the course of my community or church services? Do I honestly know my strength and weaknesses? How do I treat others? These are the contents of the packed bag that you will take to politics. If you understand these, then you can start working on which areas of your life you need to fine tune. The political space will challenge or even shatter some of your innocent assumptions about people. Heed the words of St. Paul and; Have the belt of truth fastened around your waist (Eph. 6:14)

4: Keep a close Family

You belong to a biological family and by association, other families, Village Club or Age Grade, a Society in the Church, or you are an Arsenal or Manchester United Supporters' Club etc. In each of these, you will make friends. Learn to keep and trust

some of them. Be a team player in your family. Co-operate and listen to your parents, collaborate with your siblings and cousins. The important thing is to build a formidable network.

I tell Youth Corps Members who come to Sokoto or anywhere to accept their posting as the will of God. It is best for you to build up a network of friends well beyond your immediate environment. You never know, but I can assure you, in politics, all of these friendships will come into play because it is from family and these networks that you will draw strength and resources that are freely given to you out of love. They will stand by you whether you win or lose. Trust that wherever you find yourself is where God really and truly wants you to be and He has a purpose for keeping you there. Use the time and opportunity well.

5: Learn to Serve or Volunteer

You often hear the famous expression that politics is about service which is true. Politicians also pretend that they are being almost forcefully called to come and serve. Some Governors have had as their motto such expressions as, Rescue or Restoration Missions, claiming that their mission is to restore what their predecessors had destroyed or to rescue the state and people from the dangerous precipice to which they had been brought. Often, the honeymoon dies and by the time the people wake up, they discover that Ali Baba only changed is clothes not his essence.

Genuine politicians who want to serve would already have shown signs of their capacity and ability to serve. For the young people, the best way to do this is to develop and imbibe the culture of volunteerism and service. Learn to volunteer, offer yourself for community service, from organising the Youth to clean your street, clean up sewage, Hospital visitation, helping the aged and the needy, all these are some of the little steps on the ladder of leadership. As a Catholic, the Corporal Works of Mercy are a Summary of these values.

If you are a medical Doctor or Lawyer, or good at anything, assist others. There is a saying by the Muslim beggars in the north: If Friday will be good (that is, from almsgiving), we will know by Wednesday. We can already tell a good politician from

a good Legionary, a good CYON leader and so on. When you serve people, they will serve you when you need them and you will not need to have money. As a young Lawyer in Chicago, Barack Obama was famous for helping the poor by offering free services as a Lawyer. When he needed them, they all rallied around him, volunteered, contributed and campaigned for him!

6: Know your community, speak their language, and eat their food:

One of the biggest challenges now is how much politicians are foreign to their communities. In one of our Universities, a Senior Lecturer told me that he was invited to address the Students of his ethnic group. He expected to deliver the lecture in vernacular, but when he got there, he discovered that beginning with the President of the Union, most of the students did not know their own languages. So, they had to speak in English. How sad!

There is a looming crisis around language and culture with our youth today, but for the purpose of what we are talking of, if you want to be a good politician, study the history, culture or moors of your people, know where you come from and so on. Know the Rivers, the Mountains and Forests, know the heroes and heroines of your community. In this way, when you speak, you will speak with authority, you will appeal to their emotions. Eat their food because if you cannot eat with them, sing their songs, drink their water, then you are not one of them.

Our people are not fools and they will not be carried away with your imported and fanciful American twang. By extension, know the history and culture of your country, other ethnic groups and the struggles of our founding fathers. If you don't, you will have no message to convey, no template for resolving problems. You will wait till you become Senator or Governor and think that the only job you have is to give out contracts.

7: Learn about the Catholic Church and its Teachings:

You will need to be very familiar with the doctrine and teachings of the Catholic Church if you want to be an effective Catholic politician, not a politician who is a Catholic. Read the Holy Scriptures, the Catholic Catechism, the Social Teachings of

the Church. No institution in the world, no country has shaped the thinking of the world like the Catholic Church. We started University education, we taught the world Astronomy, Diplomacy, Geology, etc. Get to know your Parish Priests, Rev. Sisters, your Bishops and other leaders of the Church. Do not be shy to approach these people. Speak to them, learn from them, and share your views and vision with them. In this way, you will be better known. Invest in making your impact felt in the Church. Show up at ordinations, consecration of Bishops, ceremonies concerning the Church.

8: See, Judge and Act:

You all know the meaning of the above expression the motto for the Youth. Most of us are guilty bystanders in our country. As young people, we can protest about food, mode of dressing, allowances, school fees and others in secular life. However, due to poor formation, our Youth are channeling their energies in the wrong direction. We look on as violence engulfs our communities and are blaming government for not providing security. In fear, we simply find whom to blame or we say the Bishops and Priests are not speaking out. Yet, some of the most spectacular changes that have happened and are happening around the world are the result of the energies of young people. Do not simply think defending your community is about being a Member of the Vigilante group armed by some politician. Become a peacemaker not a fighter, anticipate the problems before they become complicated, engage in dialogue.

The Arab Spring was the sacrifice of the Youth. Bouzouzi was a young man. Young men drove the change in South Africa. Learn to look, and when you have looked well, judge, decide and then choose your Action, no matter how small. Act locally as best as you can. Politics in the end is not about giving our contracts for construction. The military or any evil dictator can do that. If you learn to make valued moral judgments and refuse to be an onlooker, you will be fit for a leader because you will have learnt how to solve problems. Our nation is in chaos because those in power are merely office occupants and spend their time on patronage. They have no vision, no imagination of how to dream. Too many people have come to power intellectually ill equipped.

9: Read, Study and Learn:

You must be a constant learner of new things, new ideas and skills. There is war or tragedy that is new. So, read about great men and women such, Churchill, St. Pope Paul 11, Mother Theresa, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, Mandela, the whole lot. Read what you can and see how people overcame economic and other forms of deprivations and rose to greatness. Have mentors to help you develop or model your life. Learn how people like Awolowo, Nnamdi Azikiwe taught themselves, what they sacrificed in their youth to achieve greatness. Learn about deferred pleasure and dream big dreams. There are no short cuts in life. If you follow short cuts, they will often cut your life short.

10: Have a Job, a Career or a Business:

Please, remember that politics is not a form of employment. It is a gamble, sometimes you win, and sometimes you lose. What do you fall back on? You will fall back on what you were doing before politics. Do not be like those who have no Party, no ideology, believe in nothing, except the easy way to money. The corridors of power are their offices and places of worship. If you bring your career and areas of specialisation to politics, governing will be a workshop for you to design and implement the dreams you already have.

I stumbled on two things on social media and I will leave you with them. First, I saw something attributed to Uhuru Kenyatta which says: If you really love your children, get a business, not a job, because when you die, your children cannot inherit your job, they can definitely inherit your business. In fact, if you die on the job, your boss will replace you before your burial.

In another post credited to one Eric Wireko, an educationist, the author, speaking on Salary says: A salary is a bribe for one to forget their ambition. Salary earners live in a vicious circle of poverty, managed on a 30-day duration while their freedom and opinions are totally gone...Salary is a medicine for managing poverty not curing it. Only business and investment cures poverty.

Finally, I hope that you will reflect on the how of the few suggestions I have made and see what is possible and do-able. Should you end up as a politician, I believe you will find these suggestions useful. But remember, there are occupational politicians who join political parties and contest elections or those who are just members.

Know also that there are others who do not even belong to parties nor are they in full time politicians, but they are making their contributions day in and day out. They do so not only by voting but also by ensuring that their voices are heard.

You do not have to contest election to be in politics. After all, in soccer, only 22 players are on the field. Think about the millions who are just supporters and the businessmen who also make money by other means in the same Club. Whichever or whatever choice you make, use it to bring glory to God. Believe in yourself that you can and must make a difference. I thank you for our kind attention.